



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO: ALBANY LEADERS FAIL LYME SUFFERERS

SUSAN SERINO March 31, 2019

| ISSUE: **LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES, NEW YORK STATE BUDGET**

ALBANY, NY—With Albany currently engrossed in the passing of State Budget bills, Senator Sue Serino released the following statement regarding the glaring omission of \$1 million to prevent the spread of Lyme and tick-borne diseases (TBDs):

“With all of the new taxes and fees that this new budget will levy on New Yorkers—a paper bag tax, an internet tax, a prescription opioid tax, a commuter tax, and more—it is unfathomable to me that Albany’s new leaders are ignoring the voices of thousands of residents suffering from Lyme and tick-borne diseases.

*Especially with so many members on the other side of the aisle hailing from the Hudson Valley and Long Island, I am truly shocked by the omission of this critically important funding. **With reports surfacing this week** noting that New York is slated to see another boom in the tick population this spring and summer, to cut the funding we have previously been able to secure to address this epidemic is simply irresponsible.*

When I asked the Senate’s new Health Chair why the funding was omitted, he pointed to the countless other diseases they were able to find funding for in the budget. This is an issue that transcends politics, and no one disease is worse than any other to those who are suffering. We have an obligation to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers, and this budget bill fails to do that. This is just one of the many reasons I voted ‘no’ on this year’s health budget bill.”

As Chair of the Senate’s Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases, Senator Serino secured \$2.6 million to fund prevention, research, and education initiatives in the State Budget since first taking office.

Last year alone, the Senator secured a historic \$1 million, and this year, she launched an awareness campaign to drum up support among the new Senate Majority for the critically important funding. After hosting a press conference and awareness event featuring area experts and patients, Albany's new leadership signaled their support for the initiative by including \$1 million for Lyme and TBDs in their One House Budget Proposal. However, when it came time to ensure the funding made it into the final budget, the Senate dropped the funding.

“I invite my new colleagues to visit our community to see the groundbreaking work happening in our local area to combat the growing problem, like the work of local researchers at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies.” Senator Serino continued, “To be clear, this funding has always ultimately been secured by the State Senate in the final budget. I will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the countless New Yorkers who are suffering from Lyme and TBDs have a strong voice in Albany and I encourage my colleagues to seek out Lyme sufferers in their own communities, hear their stories and join me in this endeavor.”